

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES INFANTRY
AND CAVALRY SCHOOL,

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 8, 1884.

SIR:—

As instructed in your communication of a recent date, I have the honor to submit my annual report of the proceedings of the United States Infantry and Cavalry School for the year ending on the first of the present month.

During the period the troops composing this garrison have remained unchanged. The officers who entered the school for instruction last September are now pursuing the studies of the second or last year of their course? which they will complete on the 20th of June next. Of the forty-five who entered, forty-three remain, and they have thus far, with a very few exceptions, acquitted themselves with credit, and have performed both post and school duties with fidelity and zeal. I enclose herewith printed copies in triplicate of orders and circulars issued here between October 1, 1883 and September 30, 1884, immediately affecting the school, as distinguished from the post, and showing for the most part, the instruction pursued, both theoretical and practical. The first year of the theoretical course extended from October 1 to June 20. Thereafter and until the first of the present month, drawing, fieldwork in topography, and practical exercises in signalling and field telegraphy occupied all available time. It will be seen that the present course of study is much more comprehensive than that pursued by the last class. The necessary facilities have been greatly increased during the past six months. Three thousand dollars

received from the War Department, taken in connection with the fund constantly accruing at the post, have enabled the school to procure the appliances so much needed in the past. Upward of \$800 have been expended for books, maps, and charts, nearly \$800 for mathematical instruments, \$500 for printing material and machinery, nearly \$400 for photographic material and instruments, and a considerable sum in the purchase of stationary and furniture, and material for recitation rooms. The school library, independent of that connected with the post, and which is constantly increasing, contains upward of twelve hundred volumes. Instructors are enabled to secure the printing of their manuscripts prepared in the performance of their duties, and thus text-books on various subjects are being gradually obtained. Instruction is progressive and still experimental, dependent on the capacities and necessities of the students as shown by examinations before the school staff. The wide diversity of preparation which they manifest upon entrance has thus far prevented the adoption of a fixed course of theoretical instruction for the future; but it is probable that under the present War Department regulations which control appointments to the Army, this great diversity of educational requirements will not after a time exist.

The practical training of the officers here is not carried to the desired extent. Attached to company organizations as they are, and periodically serving with each of the three arms of the service, they perform all company and post duties incident to the positions which they occupy. They are called upon and obliged to exercise command both of cavalry and infantry. battalions engaged in tactical movements. They serve as adjutants upon occasions of ceremony. They are detailed to record proceedings of boards and courts. They receive limited practical instruction in

the various subjects of school study which they pursue. Still they do not participate in, and become practically acquainted with, the field service of troops, nor the varied maneuvers in which they engage in actual warfare, which depend upon features of country, character of troops and armament, and which come within the domain of strategy and grand tactics. It has as yet been found impossible to enter this field of instruction because of the continued employment of men in duties connected with the post. Building, and the extension of grounds suitably prepared to accomodate the garrison of seventy-eight officers and upward of five hundred men, as well as that floating military population—the presence of which is almost constant and the care of which imposes labor—also the preparation and maintenance of necessities and conveniences for conducting the school, have constantly occupied a large force of men and prevented the introduction of military movements on any elaborate scale or for any unusual period of time. With a diminution of fatigue details and a slightly increased permanent garrison more extended military exercises can be introduced, and the size and character of the reservation admit of great variety of maneuvers.

In the month of May last, a school for non-commissioned officers and as many of the privates of the command as might desire to attend the same, was organized. Good teachers, commodious rooms, suitable arranged and furnished, and necessary books were supplied. Attendance was made voluntary. Military instruction was not attempted. For a time the attendance was large and the scholars quite enthusiastic. During the heat of summer there was a rapid decrease of membership, and only some twelve or fifteen men are now receiving instruction. Their duties, under the present arrangement of post re-

quirements, seriously interfere with any desires which they may have to attend, and it has been determined to hold an evening session, when they may be accommodated. This school, however, does not meet demands, but is only an aid in securing wished-for results. Many competent noncommissioned officers of quick natural intelligence, and capable of exercising immediate supervision of men, are deficient in -what is termed a common school education, and are now either too old to acquire it from books, or dislike to display ignorance, or are averse to any continued mental application which impose sedentary confinement for a number of consecutive hours daily. They need military education of a practicable nature, to be acquired through instructive lectures and practice, and to embrace such subjects as it is important to know regarding company management under all conditions of service, and the knowledge of which is not gained in the performance of ordinary company duties, especially in the matter of the proper preparation of food and necessary sanitary requirements; also the primary principles governing methods of attack and defense of small bodies of troops in warfare, and how to care for men on campaigns and in battle. It is in contemplation to form classes of non-commissioned officers for these purposes, at which attendance will. be enforced, as soon as time and opportunity permit.

The progress of the year in developing the course of instruction, or really towards the construction of a foundation upon which may rest a needed permanent institution for military training, is encouraging. The post is gradually acquiring conveniences. A new hospital, store-house, and quarters for officers have been added during the year. The grounds have been extended and improved. School and recitation buildings and rooms have been improvised and fitted

up. Post and school libraries have been considerably enlarged. Many of the instruments and appliances necessary to the teaching of the military art and sciences connected therewith have been secured. Still, a great deal is required. With the development of the educational course drawing, and model, and photographic rooms, and a building for a cavalry riding school become necessary. A few additional quarters for married officers detailed as students are desirable, thus removing the obstacle which now prevents the detail of many of that class who desire to receive instruction here. The post and school are capable of considerable expansion. With a sufficient increase of buildings double the number of officers, as for instance, two belonging to each regiment of infantry and cavalry, could be received, and with the addition of two or three infantry company organizations, more effective and more comprehensive instruction could be imparted.

An undetermined question is still pending with higher authority. When shall the troops composing the present garrison be relieved, and what character of permanency shall be given to those which take their places? In my last report I remarked as follows: "I am now more firmly convinced than formerly, that one half of the companies of the garrison should be relieved at the termination of every two years' course of instruction, that all regiments may have like opportunities to receive whatever benefits the school may confer, and that the good effected here may be as widely disseminated throughout the army as possible. It will be advantageous to the post to occasionally introduce new elements into its organized garrison." I refer to this subject now, in the hope that if the relief of any or the troops is contemplated it may be effected next summer, after the

present school course shall be terminated, and when time to effect changes shall be abundant. In any meditated movement I would request an additional company of infantry, in order that effective military exercises may continue when the ordinary fatigue parties are detailed for the performance of the labor necessary at a post as extended as Fort Leavenworth, For that reason I also again request an increase in the enlisted strength of infantry companies, mindful of the difficulties which we have been obliged to meet in the past, because of the weakness of many of our organizations. This matter of exchange of troops should soon be determined, as in the coming season another set of officers must be detailed for instruction, when either exchange or the transfer of lieutenants of the permanent companies must be considered.

In closing this report I cannot commend too highly the majority of the instructors and the secretary of the school for the patient labor which they have bestowed, the ability which they have displayed, and the good which they have accomplished. Their duties, both post and school, have been arduous but they have performed them conscientiously and to my entire satisfaction, The staff has assisted the commanding officer on all possible occasions and has upheld and maintained his authority. Among so large an assemblage of officers as is gathered at this post, circumstanced as these officers are in the midst of many influences which are calculated to distract their attention from their legitimate occupations it might not be considered strange if some fail to reach professional requirements. There are such here, and there are also a few, who, in my opinion, are totally devoid of a wish to acquit themselves well or to render any assistance to the Government, Sent here for instruction, their aim is appar-

ently to escape it. Artful dodgers betwixt the moralities which stay civilized society, they might mingle with the outside world and bring into ill-repute the profession which they represent. Important and worthy of regard only because of the uniform they wear, they bring discredit on the school in the estimation of those who are unacquainted with its workings. Of such I spoke more than a year ago in memoranda addressed to the Adjutant General, as follows:

The course here is not difficult for one who has received a fair English education, and who is disposed to make good use of his time, but the school presents no attractions for demoralized and indolent gentlemen. Besides, the time expended upon them is almost thrown away. They will carry very little away with them, and will be very apt, as soon as restraint is removed, to fall into their old habits. Hence as examples for good or as members of the army expected to render valuable service, they will prove failures. Every regiment has energetic, well balanced and conscientious officers, and to such advantages of the school will be very beneficial, and the army will be benefitted hereafter by the training, discipline and habits of industry which they will acquire here. I think that regimental commanders should be charged to exercise care in making selections.

Officers of this character should not be sent here for discipline, for there is hardly time to administer it properly. Efforts to that end will, however, be continued. In all past efforts I have been actively and ably sustained by the department commander.

E. S. OTIS,

Colonel 20th Infantry, Commanding.

Adjutant General, United States Army,

Washington, D. C.

(Through, Headquarters Department of the Missouri.)